Six Pages: *Continuing Our Report from Cuba*

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Castro's Own Brand of Marxism-Leninism

Cuba, seen from within, looks very differently than from without. Food may be poor and lacking in variety, but there is enough to eat and no sign whatever of starvation; indeed one Latin American reporter, who had been all over the country in the past few months, told me he thought the poor people of Cuba were better fed today than in any other country of Latin America. I had been led by the U.S. press to expect to see a city slowly being strangled by blockade; instead the streets were lively, taxis plentiful and the number of private cars surprising for a country so dependent for its oil on a distant source of supply. The *guaguas* (buses) seemed decrepit and were terribly overcrowded in the evening rush hour —but that is hardly a condition peculiar to underdeveloped or socialist countries; bus commuters of the world everywhere are ready to unite. Finally, neither in the streets nor at the university, in the shops or restaurants, nor in their homes, do the Cubans seem a people cowed. The notion that Russian troops may be in Cuba to help Fidel hold his people down is the silliest delusion the U.S. government and press have ever encouraged. I saw no Russian soldiers and only an occasional Russian civilian in Havana, a city where everyone seems to be carrying a pistol, a sten gun or a machine gun. If the Cuban people and the Fidelistas were as permeated by discontent as Washington seems to think, they could shoot the place up and mow any stray Russians down any time they wanted to. Nowhere in the Soviet bloc are the people themselves armed as in Cuba.

We Speeded Up Cuba's Sovietization

Cuba, only 90 miles away, is today unmistakably a part of the Soviet world, and Havana is a Soviet capital. The newsstands carry only Soviet publications. The bookstores no longer display the works of heretical Communists like Victor Serge; the objective or hostile accounts of Communism one could still buy there two years ago have disappeared from the shelves. The young Cuban studying English, even when he wants to read Huckleberry Finn or Moby Dick, reads them in inexpensive Soviet editions I saw in bookstore windows. The movies show the same "Our Nikita" film as in Moscow; Polish, Bulgarian, and Chinese films have replaced Hollywood's. Partly this is our own fault. We have made dollar exchange available abroad in many countries for the import of U.S. magazines and books; we have been trying for years to get U.S. publications into Moscow. But in Cuba we shut off the export of U.S. publications and films by our trade embargo policies long before Cuba had become Sovietized culturally. If we think it would be good for U.S. policy and for better understanding to have the *New York Times* on sale in Moscow, why not in Havana? If we negotiate the entry of U.S. films into the Soviet Union, why not into Cuba? Alfredo Guevara, head of the Cuban Institute of Art and Movie Industries, in a speech to the First National Congress of Culture, held in Havana while I was there, said "we are not the enemies of the artistic works of any country" and expressed a hope for North American films. The policy of pulling down an iron curtain of our own on Cuba, of non-intercourse and embargo, has fostered Sovietization in culture as in other realms. It has speeded up the liquidation of the American presence and of American influence in this lovely neighboring isle. A more self-defeating policy would be difficult to imagine. I am not speaking only in abstract terms. I suddenly felt jealous as an American to see none of our films advertised outside the movie houses. And I felt disturbed to notice the changed attitude toward Americans. I went out of my way everywhere to say I was an American, to see what the response would be. For the first time, the response was a chill. I was not treated rudely—the Cubans are too gentle a people for that—but nobody opened up to me, and the announcement tended not to encourage but to stop conversation. We have succeeded in making ourselves unpopular in one of the few places in Latin America where North Americans were genuinely liked in the past, even by those critical of us politically.

To say that Cuba is now part of the Soviet world is no longer the end but merely the beginning of political analysis. For the Soviet world is no longer monolithic and securely centralized as in the days of Stalin. In Cuba, one is at the very heart of the growing struggle between Moscow and Pe-

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Cool—On All But Cuba

"As a man who does not ordinarily betray his emotions, President Kennedy presented a rather surprising televised figure when he visited the returned Cuban prisoners of war in Miami. His fire in declaring that they would deserve to march at the head of the column that should one day liberate Havana was hardly in keeping with the often-remarked Kennedy coolness. No one reading the speech would find in it any precise commitment. But the mood did, and it is a good bet that the exiles have taken it as an implicit promise of American help in the physical overthrow of the Castro regime by revolt. It is notoriously unwise of statesmen in a host country to whet the expectation of exiles for a triumphant return to their homeland. Previous U.S. Presidents should have learned that in their dealings with the Formosan Chinese. Certainly Churchill learned in World War II that exile armies and their labyrinthine politics can be vexatious. The day may come when President Kennedy will regret his fiery exuberance in his speech to the Cubans."

—San Francisco Chronicle, Jan. 1 (Abridged)

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king, a struggle as fierce but of far larger dimensions than that between Stalin and Trotzky. Then the instrument of state power was securely in the hands of one faction. Now each has its capital and a mighty country at its disposal. Of all the schisms that have rent world communism since 1917, this is the most momentous, for there are huge armies and resources—and fundamental national conflicts—on both sides. But Cuba is no mere passive bone of contention between these two giant rivals. On the contrary, just as Fidel Castro by sheer uncompromising verve and nerve has made this little island of less than 7,000,000 people the catalytic factor in the relations of two continents, of Anglo-Saxon North America and its Latin neighbors to the South, so he has made Cuba a positive and independent factor in internal Soviet bloc politics.

Why Cuba Is Popular in The Bloc

The split between Moscow and Peking, Khrushchev and Mao, is only the most obvious and sensational of the turbulent convulsions today in a Soviet world coming alive again from its Stalinist Ice Age. Less sensational but in many ways more important for the future is the tough rear guard action being fought by the "dogmatists"—the hard liners—against a youth whose appetite for freedom has only been whetted by the zigzags of the Khrushchevite thaw. These liberal forces find their inspiration in Cuba. "The Albanians," one shrewd Soviet bloc observer told me, "are only tribal gangsters. They carry no weight elsewhere in the bloc. But the Cubans are another story. They are like early Christians. The honesty, the selflessness, the revolutionary purity of the leadership centered around Fidel Castro represent a new and thrilling phenomena for Soviet youth. They grew up in the stuffy atmosphere of bureaucracy and repression. They have never seen a revolution in its first and marvellous phase. A new and inspiring wind blows out of Cuba, and Fidel and Cuba are immensely popular everywhere in the bloc. For Khrushchev, China is a foreign policy matter. But Cuba is in a curious way a domestic matter. Mikoyan, you will notice, did not spend 23 days in China. He spent them in Cuba. This is a measure of its importance." Khrushchev cannot ignore Cuba's popularity at home in the Soviet Union because Fidel is popular with the same forces which see in Khrushchev their best hope of winning and widening the fight against neo-Stalinist dogmatism.

Interlocked with these divergent views on foreign and domestic policy are those controversies which center about "different roads to socialism"—the question of how much freedom shall be granted the various Soviet regimes and the various Communist parties in the non-Communist world. One reason for the convulsions shaking the bloc is that considerable freedom and considerable polycentrism has developed; life stirs again in the bureaucritized corpse of Marxism-Leninism. Cuba, on the far periphery of the Soviet world geographically, not even fully accepted as genuinely "Marxist-Leninist" much less as a member of the Warsaw Pact, has become in a paradoxical way the cross-roads of Sovietism ideologically. Cuba is at the very centre of its decisive battles.

Cuba is the one nation in the Soviet world which is still not securely either in the Russan or the Chinese camp. It is the only place in the Soviet world where the full texts of both Khrushchev and Mao are regularly and impartially published. Castro, though dependent on Russia and the Russian bloc, said not a single word in praise of Khrushchev in his January 2 speech on the fourth anniversary of the Cuban revolution. On the contrary, he said very cooly, "The Soviet government, in search of peace, arrived at certain agreements with the North American government, but this does not mean that we have renounced this right, the right to possess the weapons we deem pertinent as a sovereign country. And for that reason we do not accept the unilateral inspection that they wanted to establish here with the only purpose, of the imperialists, to humble us. And there was no inspection and there will be no inspection. And if they want inspection, let them permit us to inspect them." This, in the Cuban context and atmosphere, was not just telling off Kennedy. It was also telling off Khrushchev.

The Last Refuge of Romantic Illusion

"A frail and weak child, Romantic Illusion, roved homelessly over the earth. Hastily and maliciously businessmen stepped on it. Newspaper vendors, proclaiming their lies, in turn kicked it with their elbows. The howls of the twist and the outcry of atomic explosions terrorized it. There was nothing left but to pick nuclear mushrooms. It wanted to die.

"It did not die. It put its little feet into the water without breaking the reflection and went to a small island called Cuba. That frail child, Illusion, put on an olive green cap, the high boots of the soldier. It knotted around it, the two-colored fringe of the 26th of July and took a gun into its hands. And, in this the unromantic century of cybernetics, that small island transformed itself into a great continent full of romanticism, longing for battle."

—The Russian poet Yevtushenko in Revolucion, Cuba's Fidelista daily, November 29, 1962.

"In No Country Have I Seen Such Intimacy Between A Leader and His People"

"In no country have I seen such an intimacy between a leader and his people. Everyone knows that Fidel Castro may appear anywhere and at any moment; it may be in a restaurant or it may be in an isolated village where his helicopter will set itself down. He is not adored as an inaccessible chief, but loved with an overwhelming affection. Let him appear, and people study his face, listen carefully to his voice: 'He is tired,' 'He is still hoarse.' And they shower him with advice: 'Fidel, you must rest,' 'Take care of yourself.' Everyone talks to him of his own case, tells him his troubles, complains of an injustice, compliments him on such and such decision, and each time—and this is the miracle—Fidel responds as if he knew personally each man who speaks to him. Hence his extraordinary popularity.

"There is no question with which he does not occupy himself. In the middle of the most important problems, he will address himself suddenly to women in order to tell them they will soon again have the sandals with straps they love so much to wear. Several months ago he learned that the children of the Sierra Maestra had not yet forgotten the bombardments of Batista's air force; every time they hear a plane, they are seized with fright. Fidel thought it over and hit upon the idea of sending planes loaded with toys to be sent down by parachute. Thus the idea of death perhaps will no longer be associated in their minds with the flight of planes."

—From a Report on Cuba in Le Monde (Paris) Jan. 1

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American official propaganda comforts itself with the idea that Castro lost prestige in the missile affair. But as seen from Havana, it is not Castro who has lost prestige in recent weeks. It is Kennedy and Khrushchev who have lost prestige. Castro's answer to the missiles removal agreement was his Five Points and his refusal to permit inspection. Castro explained privately according to one account, that a big power could place and remove missiles without loss of prestige, but that for Cuba prestige was an almost material thing it could not afford to lose. So in his darkest recent hour, with the news that Khrushchev over his head had negotiated removal of the missiles with Kennedy, Castro sat down and wrote his Five Points, among them the return of Guantanamo, and made Khrushchev accept them! It was Russia and America which had to give way on inspection, not Cuba. On the heels of that, Castro made Kennedy pay the full $62,000,000 fine imposed on the exiles who attempted the Bay of Pigs invasion. When the cash and freight costs are added to the $53,000,000 in food and medicine, Castro got every last dollar of that fine. Months ago he would have ransomed them for $28,000,000. We refused and ended up by paying $62,000,000. Can the Fidelistas be blamed if they feel that Castro emerged with *increased,* Kennedy and Khrushchev with *diminished,* prestige? One of the smallest countries on earth made the two giants of the planet accept its terms. Is it any wonder if some Cubans go beyond even the Chinese and regard both U.S. and USSR as paper tigers?

Some European Communists regard Cuba as under Chinese influence. This is a gross oversimplification. Fidel's Marxism-Leninism is a *compote* all his own. In foreign policy, it is true, he is close to the Chinese viewpoint, for both Cuba and China are treated as outcasts and enemies by U.S. policy. He also shares China's hostility to Yugoslavia, since Tito is a beneficiary of U.S. aid—but internally Castroism is more Titoist than Tito himself. No country in the bloc is so surely pursuing its own different road to socialism. In press relations with Western correspondents, Cuba is almost Stalinist. In dealing with the arts, the students and internal discussion, Cuba has passed safely through a brief Socialist Realist phase and is now by Soviet standards *avant garde.* For Cuba, as

Old Stalinist Out

"Havana (French Press Agency)—The rector [head] of the University of Havana, Juan Marinello, has been virtually ousted from his post, according to trustworthy sources. Rector Marinello has been vigorously criticized by the students, who sent a letter recently to Prime Minister Fidel Castro in which they denounced him (Marinello) as sectarian.

"They reproach Juan Marinello with the harshness of his Marxist-Leninist line. The well-known University rector belongs to the group of the "Seven Old Stalinist Communists." His case has been discussed between Castro and the delegates of the University who asked for his (Marinello's) departure. The University of Havana as a Marxist center is considered as 'opportunist Krushchevite.' The discharge of the rector is to be announced in the next few days."

—Diario Las Americas (Miami) Jan. 5

How Castro Attacked the Communist Effort to Become A Privileged Ruling Caste

"The tendency to mistrust everybody who could not claim a long record of revolutionary militancy, who had not been an old Marxist militant . . . the sectarianism of believing that the only revolutionaries, the only ones who could have positions of trust, the only ones who could hold a post on a People's Farm, on a Cooperative, in the government, anywhere, had to be old Marxist militants. . . .

"That policy introduced extraneous matters into the integration process [of merging the three Cuban revolutionary movements—the 13th of March Revolutionary Directorate, Fidel's 26th of July Movement and the Popular Socialist Party as the Cuban Communist Party was called—into a united party, the ORI—IFS] . . . and so many, many months after the forces had been officially integrated, one found someone who would come out and say: 'He's not a member of the Party.' To what Party was he referring, if there already was a new organization here? . . .

"To what did such a state of affairs give rise? To vanity, to the domination of influence, to privilege. What would this engender but conditions which would earn the old Communists the antipathy and suspicion of the masses? . . .

"Add to this the fact that if an old Communist made mistakes, nothing was done to him; he was not removed from his post, nor was he disciplined in any way . . . it was an established method for the indulgence of all faults; to create a caste spirit, to create a clique spirit. . . . Some comrades had lost all sense of control. They imagined they had won the Revolution in a raffle. . . .

"How were the ORI nuclei formed? I'm going to tell you how. In every province the general secretary of the PSP [Cuban Communist party] was made general secretary of the ORI; in every municipality, the general secretary of the PSP was made general secretary of the ORI; in every nucleus, the general secretary—the member of the PSP—was made general secretary. Is that what you would call integration? Comrade Anibal Escalante [the now exiled Communist who was top general secretary of the ORI] is responsible for that policy.

"What resulted from this? . . . If extreme sectarianism still remains, it will once again give rise to anti-communism and to confusion. Because many people will ask: 'Is this Communism? Is this Marxism? Is this socialism? This arbitrariness, this abuse, this privilege, all this, is this Communism?

" 'If this is Communism,' they will say like the [Cuban] Indian Chief Hatuey: When Hatuey was being burned at the stake, a priest came up to him to ask him if he wanted to go to Heaven, and he said, 'No, I don't want to go to Heaven if Heaven is all of this.' Do you understand me? I have to speak clearly. . . .

"That sectarianism fosters anti-communism anew. . . . To isolate oneself from the masses when one is in power, that is madness. It is another matter to be isolated by the ruling classes . . . but to be divorced from the masses when the workers, the farmers, the working class is in power, is a crime. Then sectarianism becomes counter-revolutionary.

"The organization of the ORI nuclei was begun, but the nuclei were secret; they were secret. Can you conceive of forming a secret nucleus exactly as it would have been formed under Batista? . . . Our party has to be organized using Marxist methods, not the methods of Louis XIV. . . .

"One must demand that he [the man picked as member in the ORI nuclei] assume his responsibilities so that the people may see that being a member of the organization does not entitle one to privileges . . . to the right to meddle, or to favors of any sort. No! Let everyone be aware that belonging to that organization may be a great honor, but that it also means more sacrifice, more work than others . . . fewer privileges than others."

—Castro's speech March 26, 1962 against sectarianism

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seen from the West, has lost considerable intellectual freedom but Cuba, as seen from the Soviet East, now has more artistic and intellectual freedom than any other member of the bloc except perhaps Poland. In some ways Cuba is Trotzkyist without knowing it—here the revolution is *permanent,* the foreign policy revolutionary rather than collaborationist but the domestic policy in the arts and thought freer.

Almost An Anarchist State

Indeed as seen from within, the island often seems to be anarchist, and hard to fit into the conventional lineaments of Marxism-Leninism altogether. It was a revolution made without a Party and is today in many ways a government without a State. There are organs of administration but no legislature, not even of the Communist rubber stamp variety; no visible local or provincial governments. Fidel roams the island, his own inspector general, in constant touch with popular feeling, carrying on the government under his hat. Celia Sanchez, secretary to the offices of both President and Prime Minister, is said to be the one firm central organ of government which can be located with certainty in one appointed spot. The term Popular Democracy is Orwellian double talk in Eastern Eu-

Perhaps We'd Better Free The US Before We Free Cuba

"We are patriotic American students from campuses all over the U.S. We are not transporting missiles to Cuba, only open and inquiring minds. To form a more perfect opinion of Cuba and our policy towards it, we must be permitted to travel there. The State Dept. has already formed its opinion. Jefferson said: 'Error of opinion may be tolerated only where reason is left free to combat it.' Reason cannot be free where it is subject to bans and criminal action."

—Ad Hoc Student Committee for Travel to Cuba, protesting the State Dept's travel ban.

Yevtushenko Defends Abstract Art and Creative Freedom in Message to Cuba

"The Soviet Union is an example for Cuba. Also, Cuba is an example for the Soviet Union, especially for our youth. We were the first country to build socialism. It is impossible to be first without making mistakes. We made many. It would be absurd to suppose that all these were only Stalin's fault, even though he may have been personally responsible for many. I don't think that Stalin was a cynic who made high sounding speeches about communism without believing in it. Stalin had faith in communism, but men were only construction material to him. He forgot that they were also the future inhabitants of the building. And he forgot that the means must be worthy of the end.

"He who lacks scruples can jeopardize the higher ends and cause men to forget them, as in this case the end is transformed into the means for justifying the lack of scruples. How can we explain the death of so many worthy men, unjustly accused? How can we explain forgetting the most vital needs of workers and farmers, and the mismanagement of public funds, channelled into the construction of gigantic monuments and imposing buildings?

"How can we justify the implacable criticism and persecution of the best writers who, for love of their country, refused to paint reality in rosy colors—and the praise, way out of proportion, of mediocre writers who have the spirit of lackeys and who agree to show life as a confectioner's shop of Communism?

"Communism is the supreme incarnation of the truth. Can we arrive at the truth through lies? Won't the truth change into just another lie? We can well imagine that the Soviet people must have strength of titanic proportions if it has maintained its faith in communism despite all its undeserved sufferings.

"It is of singular importance for us that all the countries who follow our experience elect only the good means. That will be the only way in which we can morally justify our mistakes, so that the countries which start their own socialist construction do not make the same ones again.

"We do not want those countries to forget again that in addition to building Communism the people must eat, be dressed and live. Today we have achieved that our people live well, that those who build communism are well fed and dressed.

"We do not want these countries to repeat the dogmatizing tendencies which we denounce in our governmental and party organization. This is why it is of particular importance to us that the Cuban people energetically condemned the dogmatism of some of its public figures, attacking it by its roots. [Reference to the Escalante affair, see box on p. 3.] Dogmatism and bureaucracy contradict the essence of revolution.

"An inevitable consequence of dogmatism is the shifting around of history. To make the past look better or to interpret it tendentiously implies unavoidably that the present is made to look prettier or is falsely interpreted.

"Therefore it assumed particular importance for us that Fidel Castro energetically attacked the intentions of the falsifiers who dared suppress some lines of the legacy of Jose Antonio Echevarria which did not coincide with the concepts of the dogmatists.*

"We do not want those countries to repeat the mistakes which we made in the realm of literature. In the years of the personality cult, and despite it, notable literary works were produced; but, in general, all the literature went along artificial paths in order to hide and cover up difficulties and deficiencies, to sounding the golden fanfares so that certain sobs could not be heard. During the period in question, our literature resembled the theme of Gogol's story, "The Picture." The painter Chatkov, in order to satisfy his clients, never failed to eliminate from all his paintings all kinds of wrinkles.

"We also don't want the painters of the countries which build socialism to repeat our mistakes in the realm of the Fine Arts. Our country is one of the originators of modern pictorial art. Russia was the cradle of realists in painting, but also saw the birth of Kandinsky, Malevich, Chagal, Goncharova. But despite this for a long time our painters' themes were no more inspired than the portraits of Stalin with or without pipe, farmhouses luxuriously decorated with artistic plates, or petrified and inexpressive faces of workers in stereotyped poses before foundries.

"The dogmatic criticism which we had to live with for many years stated that abstract art is a product of capitalism and that to paint pictures of that kind means to fall into the snare of capitalist ideology. I know personally many of the Cuban painters who were represented at the Moscow exhibit and I know to what point they are true to their revolutionary ideas. Many of them are abstract painters. Is this logical? And Picasso? There is a real citizen and Communist. Has he, too, fallen into the snares of capitalist ideology?"

—Abridged from an article by the Russian poet Yevtushenko, "I Spoke Four Hours With Fideal", in Revolucion (Havana) Nov. 29, 1962.

*A reference to the speech made by Castro March 13 of last year in honor of Echevarria, one of the heroes in the struggle against Batista. Fidel scolded "sectarians" who omitted from the final testament of Echevarria, a pious Catholic, those lines in which he said, "We are confident that the purity of our intentions will bring us the favor of God, to achieve the reign of justice in our land."

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rope, for its bureaucratic police regimes are neither popular nor democratic. But Cuba in its own peculiar way *is* a Popular Democracy, a kind of continuous town meeting under a popular dictator, very much like the demagogues (the word in Greek merely means leaders of the *demos,* or people) who led the poor against the rich in the Greek city States. Marx and Lenin would be delighted perhaps but certainly a little confused by what goes on in Cuba today in their name.

They Mistook Castro for A Kerensky

For one thing, Cuba is the one Soviet State in which the Communist Party not only does not rule but is on notice that it had better behave itself. On this tropical island, everything grows fast, even ideologies, and few Americans are aware of the swift ideological changes which have been occurring in Cuba. In December, 1961, Fidel made his famous speech declaring himself a Marxist-Leninist. Three months later he made his first anti-Communist speech, driving a Communist leader into exile and purging his followers from the government. (See box on page 3). In the intricate maneuvers which went on between the Fidelistas and the Communists, the latter thought they could take over the new revolutionary organization (ORI) into which Fidel sought to merge his July 26 movement, the 13th of March Revolutionary Directorate and the Popular Socialist Party (as the Communists call themselves). A Communist, Anibal Escalante, was made general secretary of the ORI and sought by tactics like Stalin's to take over, putting his men into key positions and making Communist party loyalty the first qualification for membership.

In addition, according to Fidel's speech of March 26, 1962, which drove Escalante into exile, a whispering campaign was begun "against the prestige of certain well known and very valuable comrades" who were regarded as too independent of the CP clique. Che Guevara is reported to have been one of their targets, for he fought this tendency to "sectarianism" in filling the key posts of government and industry. Some Communists seem to have made the mistake, among others, of regarding Fidel as a petit bourgeois, perhaps even a sort of Cuban Kerensky, who could be replaced by them as the revolution proceeded. This was how they regarded him when he was up in the hills fighting Batista and some of the same attitude seems to have survived. For in the speech Castro complained that some people "after having skimmed a little Marxist book" went around saying that his famous 1953 speech, *History Will Absolve Me,* "was a reactionary document." Castro admitted that this speech "was not yet the expression of a Marxist mind, but it was the expression of a young man who was leaning toward Marxism and who was beginning to act like a Marxist." But he said its value lay not in "its theoretical, economic and political content" but in the fact that it was a denunciation of the Batista dictatorship "made in the midst of the bayonets of a hundred soldiers . . . a task a bit more difficult than that of posing as a revolutionary now." Wounded pride is not the least important element visible in this speech, a turning point in Cuba's internal politics.

Seen in perspective, Fidel's "I am a Marxist-Leninist" speech outflanked the Communists and made it possible for him to attack them three months later without seeming to be engaged in a rightist maneuver. The strangest part of the whole affair is that the Chinese, everywhere else, complain that the Russians help bourgeois nationalists in the colonial world rather than Communists, but in Cuba they support Fidel rather than the Cuban CP. More gently but as unmistakably

Do-It-Yourself-Quiz on Agrarian Reform

We suggest that readers give themselves a little quiz on the Cuban exiles, though the questions we suggest are not so difficult as to warrant too elaborate an award for correct answers. 1. Why was it that the exiles in the Orange Bowl, so fervent in shouting "guerra, guerra" (war, war) were so unresponsive when the President pledged support for agrarian reform? 2. Could it be that most of them would prefer restoration of the happy system under which a small section of the Cuban people waxed wealthy at the expense of the rest as a junior partner in U.S. exploitation? 3. Read the list of the great companies—many with Latin American subsidiaries—who chipped in (though mostly at the expense of the Treasury) on the ransom and ask yourself: Would they have ransomed an expedition against Batista, or any other Latin dictator who played ball with U.S. big business? Would they have chipped in on this one if they thought seriously the overthrow of Castro was a crusade for agrarian reform? A suitable prize for the correct answer might be a dozen bananas.

How Castro Replied to Kennedy's Promise at Miami of Agrarian Reform

"But the curious thing, could Kennedy be changing? (Crowd laughs.) The curious thing is that he speaks of our offering an end to economic exploitation and then immediately says: 'Under the Alliance for Progress, we support for Cuba and for all the countries of this hemisphere the right to free elections and the right to the free exercise of basic human rights. We support agrarian reform.' (Crowd laughs.) Could Kennedy be converting to Marxism-Leninism? (Crowd laughs.)

"The fact is that in this country more than 100,000 peasant families paid rents, which at times were 50 percent of their products. Who finds a peasant along the length and breadth of the country paying rent now? More than 100,000 exploited peasants became owners of their lands. (Applause.) But why does this gentleman think that the peasants are with the revolution? . . .

"It is very curious that we hear the chief of the Yankee empire speak of economic exploitation, agrarian reform, and such things. When, before, did he speak of such things? Never. Of course, they do not speak sincerely, but how long have they been speaking this language? (Crowd shouts.) Who were their teachers? (Crowd shouts.) The Cubans. Too bad we have such bad disciples. (Applause.) And this gentleman uses a strange language, a revolutionary language. This is curious. He is going to create some problems with the reactionaries because, although the reactionaries know that what he says is a story, they also know that one must not play with words. The Latin American latifundistas are going to say: 'Well, if we will distribute our lands, you must distribute the oil, the copper, the iron, and all the monopolies you have here.' Those are the irreconcilable contradictions of imperialism. How can they use this language?

"He then says: 'We support the agrarian reform and the right of each peasant to own the land he works.' That is precisely what we said, but we are the only ones who have done it."

—Castro Jan. 2 as monitored in Washington

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The Soviet Burden in Cuba Is Far Lighter Than Our Own

as in Ben Bella's Algeria, the Communists are being liquidated as an independent political force. Fidel is constructing a new party, as Tito did, and when that job of organization is accomplished he will have not only full command at home but greater maneuvering power in foreign policy. No ruler ever managed to exercise more political independence in a situation more intrinsically dependent than Fidel's, for his is the only Soviet bloc country which is almost entirely shut off from trade with the non-Soviet world. As in his original landing against Batista, Fidel's main resource is nerve, and we will never be able to think straight about Cuba until we abandon the notion that this soldier-statesman is a puppet, a fool or a "nut."

Fidelismo Pragmatic in Action

In attempting, however imperfectly, to sketch in some of the nuances of Cuba's position, I do not want to leave the impression that I think Fidel Castro is in any way an American style anti-Communist. In reading the I-am-a-Marxist-Leninist speech and in revisiting Cuba, I felt that this speech had been doubly distorted in the U.S. The right wingers seized on it to say, "You see, Fidel was a Communist all along." Persons like myself, friendly to Cuba, and with a lifelong acquaintance with Communists, simply could not see Fidel Castro as a Marxist-Leninist and interpreted the speech as some kind of maneuver to assure Soviet support. I no longer think this true. I think the speech is to be read as a truthful statement. Castro in his own mind has become a Marxist-Leninist. He sees the one party socialist state as a swift means of development. He believes the Cuban revolution would have been crushed without Soviet aid and orientation. He may also regard Marxism-Leninism as the philosophy furthest removed from the U.S. and therefore most likely to keep his revolutionary youth from contamination by the U.S. But at the same time, for him, Marxism-Leninism is not the same as accepting dictation either by the Cuban Communist Party or by the Soviet bloc. This is *his* revolution. He wouldn't have made it if he had gone by the Marxist-Leninist book, and he won't let theory stand in the way of any action needed to preserve it. Under the surface of their oversimplified—often downright "infantile Left"—theories, these Cuban "Marxist-Leninists" are pragmatic. When Che Guevara told the students, "If we're Marxists, we got their our own way," he was giving us a basic insight into the Fidelista movement.

An equally pragmatic U.S. foreign policy could come to terms with Cuba if it were willing to accept the basic aims of the Castro revolution. On that basis, in my opinion, the problem of compensation could be solved and the fear of a Soviet base on our doorstep dissipated. Time is on Fidel's side; his problems and Cuba's are minor. We exaggerate the burden on the Soviet bloc; it can easily provide the machine tools and technicians to make a success in so small and rich an island. All they need to do is to make a showplace for 6,500,000 Cubans and we will be on the spot with the 200,000,000 in the rest of Latin America. With that sobering statistic I bring this second installment of my report to a close.

More on Cuba Next Week

How 'Containment' May Crack

"New York (AP)—Any worsening of relations between the U.S. and Brazil holds the ironic possibility that the enormous sums of U.S. dollars invested there could be used indirectly to help Cuba out of its economic troubles. Washington has expressed grave concern about Brazil's economic and political direction. One of the factors in this concern is a recent trade commission set up by Brazil for expanding trade with the Communist bloc.

"Sympathetic toward Fidel Castro's Cuba, the Brazilian government has been steering what its leaders call an independent course. But in Washington, officials view this as leaning toward a dangerous neutralism. . . . With Brazil's financial situation worsening and inflation raging, Brazil badly needs heavy industrial equipment for its development program. The Russians have it. What the Russians might have in mind is a triple trade play—from the Soviet Union to Brazil to Cuba.

"Brazil produces much of what Cuba needs: Medical drugs, automobiles, trucks, buses, motor vehicle parts, farm equipment, shoes and meat."

—Miami Herald, Dec. 24

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